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CIRCULAR LETTER

— OF —

His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto,

— TO THE —

CATHOLIC CLERGY OF THE CITY.

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REV. AND DEAR FATHERS :

We deem it our duty to call your attention, and the attention also of your people, to the recent action of the City Council Executive in refusing the allowance hitherto given for the treatment of the sick poor in St. Michael's Hospital. The reasons given for this hostile action rest on foundations of sand. One member spoke against sectarianism in the public dealings with the Hospitals. "Sectarianism" is here doubtless meant for distinctive religious beliefs and ministrations. Now, if the teachings and ministrations of the Christian faith are at all times of the greatest moment to man, if the consolations and hopes and the sustaining influences and graces which the Christian religion imparts are at all times of priceless value, surely they must be of infinite importance and of inestimable value to all, but especially to the poor, in the time of pain and suffering, and amid the sorrows and anguish and fears of the death bed. If public charity should always be given not only in a spirit of impartial justice, but also in a spirit of Christian tenderness and compassion, it should be administered with special sympathy and kindly thoughtfulness during the visitations of sickness, and in a way...

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that will bring most comfort to the heart and the soul that are sick as well as to the suffering body.

Can any one for a moment deny that for the sick Catholic poor the ministrations of the Sisters of Charity, their Christ-like sympathy for the suffering, their life-long consecration to the alleviation of human misery, their prayers and spiritual exhortations and instructions, the hopes and the trust in the merciful God their presence and example as well as their words inspire, are of a value and importance that are simply inestimable? Is it kind, is it charitable, is it Christian to take the poor that are at our mercy, and especially in the dark hours of their sickness that for many may be unto death, away from such blessed influence and comforting surroundings, and force them into institutions where, from the nature of things, they cannot have these priceless advantages in full measure and completeness?

But, says another sapient alderman—a medical doctor—“These charitable institutions are mere ‘fads,’ and were the grants continued to them the General Hospital would be sadly crippled.” So that it is the welfare of the General Hospital that must be considered, and not the interests of the sick poor; in other words, the sick poor exist for the sake of the hospital, and not the hospital for the sick poor. The doctor justifies his course by what, in the face of the evidence, we must call false allegations and accusations. Hear him: “The responsible Superintendent is not a qualified physician, for it is no other than Madame de Chantal.” This lady is the responsible Superintendent of the institution as far as its general and economic management is concerned, but she has nothing whatever to do with the medical treatment of the patients; and the institution has a qualified resident physician, who is medical superintendent. Hence the allegation of the doctor is false, in the sense which he meant.

Again he accuses the religious nurses of the institution as negligent and inefficient, and he bases this serious charge

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ADAMAS TO

on the evidence of two physicians whose names are not mentioned, but which he was prepared to impart *privately*. What sort of evidence is this on which to assail the character and smirch the fair fame of an important institution? Such back-stair evidence would be laughed out of a court of law; and yet it is on the strength of such testimony the public are asked to believe the story of the inefficiency and negligence of the Sisters as nurses! Who are those unnamed physicians? If they exist let them, in common fairness and manliness, come forward and give their names, and then we shall be able to estimate the value of their testimony.

Happily for the interests of truth and for the defence of the Sisters we have not to depend on the hole-and-corner evidence of nameless doctors. Here is the evidence of the resident Medical Superintendent, and here also is quoted the testimony of the Medical Staff of St. Michael's Hospital:

#### DR. DWYER'S STATEMENT.

*Editor News:*—In Friday's issue of your paper certain statements were made by Ald. Orr concerning St. Michael's Hosital. These statements were made during a committee meeting of the City Council and are as follows:

1. That I am not a qualified physician.
2. The nursing is defective.
3. That no advantages are given to students.
4. That patients are kept after being cured and given work to do, such as cooking, etc.
5. That patients are not properly attended.

To all of the charges I give an absolute denial as follows:

1. I am a graduate of Toronto University, and a licensed practitioner, and I am and have been the resident medical superintendent of St. Michael's, dating from its inception.
2. We have a competent staff of nurses, while of their faithfulness and efficiency the staff and I are the best judges, and they are fully up to the standard.

3. The students of the Women's Medical College have had clinics all winter, and the same liberty has been given to Toronto University—a privilege which has been taken advantage of, as will be seen by the curriculum.

4. Patients are not given work to do when convalescent any more than at the General Hospital, where one of the printed rules is that convalescent patients must assist the nurses.

The fifth charge may be characterized as grossly untrue.

It is also insinuated that St. Michael's is a sectarian institution. Since the opening 169 Protestants have been treated, and no distinction has ever been made between denominations. This does not savor of sectarianism.

Dr. Orr further states that Dr. Sheard substantiated the above statements. From my knowledge of Dr. Sheard I will take the liberty of doubting this.

R. J. DWYER, M. D., M. C. P. S. O.,  
Medical superintendent.

St. Michael's Hospital, June 2, 1893.

#### TESTIMONY OF THE MEDICAL STAFF.

Owing to statements made concerning St. Michael's Hospital by Dr. Orr, as reported by the public press, a meeting of the Staff was called on Thursday afternoon, 8th June, and it was unanimously resolved:

1st. That the resident physician is a thoroughly qualified and efficient Superintendent.

2nd. That the nursing has been satisfactory, and the nurses have been efficient and attentive.

3rd. That the Hospital has been used extensively for clinical instruction by the Faculty and Students of the Woman's Medical College, and that the Student's of the University of Toronto have had the same privileges.

4th. That the management and equipment are excellent.

5th. That patients have been admitted and treated without regard to creed.

6th. That a down town Emergency Hospital is desirable for the reception of severe accident cases.

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7th. Moreover, that since Dr. Orr's statements have influenced the public as well as the City Council prejudicially to the interests of the Hospital, we desire to contradict them, and express the hope that St. Michael's Hospital will continue to receive the same aid from the City Council that it had in the past.

C. R. CUTHBERTSON, M.D.

N. WALLACE, M.D.

T. F. McMAHON, M.D.

WALTER McKEOWN.

R. B. NEVITT.

J. A. AMYOT.

EDMUND E. KING.

J. H. CAMERON.

C. McKENNA.

A. McPHEDRAN.

A. H. GARRATT.

D. CAMPBELL MEYERS.

JOHN CAURN, M.B.

In the face of such overwhelming evidence we repel with just indignation the false charges and malignant accusations made against St. Michael's Hospital and the devoted and Christ-consecrated women who minister within its walls, and who have left the world and all that it holds dear to expend their lives, for Christ's dear sake, in the service of the poor, the sick and the suffering. They labour not for earthly gain or human applause; they do good by stealth and blush to find it fame; and in this materialistic age their self-denial and self-sacrifice, their disinterested labours, their life-long consecration to the great and holy cause of aiding and relieving the suffering poor, in smoothing the pillow of the sick bed, and raising heavenward the thoughts and hopes of the dying, deserve public recognition and commendation instead of the revilings and injustices of blind and brutal bigotry.

In this connection we make bold to affirm that neither the action of the Executive of the City Council nor the groundless reasons on which that action is sought to be justified represent



the views or receive the approval of the fair-minded, intelligent citizens of Toronto. These citizens are large-hearted and tender towards the poor, and are animated by the spirit of justice and fair play towards their fellow-citizens of all denominations ; and we are very much mistaken if, in due time, they will fail to right the wrong inflicted, and to require that the sick poor shall be sent to the institutions of their choice,

What good can this wretched intolerance and religious bigotry effect ? Will they contribute to the promotion and diffusion of the sweet charities of life ? Will they make the social relations of our citizens pleasanter and happier ? Will they not, on the contrary, serve to offend and irritate, and to sting with a sense of wrong a large class of our fellow-citizens ?

In any case, the duty of our Catholic people in this emergency is as clear as the day. We must protect, help and uphold St. Michael's Hospital. We must aid it by our sympathy, our encouragement and by monetary contributions. We must enable it to keep its doors wide open for the sick poor, whether Catholic or Protestant. No child of misfortune of any creed or color must ever be refused its sacred hospitality when suffering from the pangs of disease. Above all, we charge the Catholic Clergy of this city to see to it that all our sick poor who need medical treatment shall be sent to St. Michael's Hospital. There they will be heartily welcome ; there their bodily ailments will be carefully and scientifically treated, and their religious interests will be in safe keeping ; there the holy Sacraments can be administered with the respect and reverence due to them, and can be received by the sick and dying poor in prayerful recollection without the fear of the scoffs and sneers of unbelievers.

We require of the Clergy, to announce from their pulpits on Sunday next our express desire that all our sick poor shall henceforward go to St. Michael's Hospital for medical treat-

ment, and we expect of our Clergy that they will faithfully carry out our desires in this respect.

This circular letter shall be read at all the Masses in all the Catholic churches in this city on Sunday next.

Believe us to be,

Rev. and Dear Fathers,

Your devoted servant in Christ,

+ John Walsh

Archbishop of Toronto

ST. MICHAEL'S PALACE,

TORONTO, June the 17th, 1893.

N. B. It is but fair to state that his worship the Mayor and several Aldermen did their duty nobly by St. Michael's Hospital, and the fact will not be forgotten by our people.

+ J. W.